



QCGN Delegation Meets with Premier Couillard



Photo: Claude Hurens

President's Message

By James Shea
QCGN President

Two weeks ago a delegation from the Quebec Community Groups Network met privately with **Premier Philippe Couillard** to discuss issues of concern to Quebec's English-speaking communities. Also on hand were Ministers **Kathleen Weil** and **Geoffrey Kelley**, as well as MNA **David Birnbaum**, who brokered the meeting. We discussed a wide range of topics from youth and reforms in health and education to the dearth of English-speaking Quebecers in the provincial civil service and the lack of individuals from our communities who are nominated to sit on government boards and agencies. The summit concluded with the promise to meet again and formalize a process for regular meetings with the premier and his staff to provide input from our community before, not after, it proposes policies and legislation that have significant impacts on our community. Our QCGN delegation included vice-president **Geoffrey Chambers**, Health and Social Service Committee chair **Eric Maldoff**, treasurer **Joe Rabinovitch**, and our director general **Sylvia Martin-Laforge**. The meeting had wide impact and we were extremely pleased to read Wednesday's editorial in the Gazette which championed our cause and encouraged the government to go even further and create a liaison office for our community. This suggestion, that was championed by outgoing **Commissioner of Official Languages Graham Fraser**, is gaining ground despite being met with lukewarm reactions from the media and government representatives when first put forward by the QCGN a few years ago. Click [here](#) to read The Gazette's editorial and [here](#) for the Global Montreal article about their similar point-of-view on the subject. Read our press release [here](#). Also, see coverage of the meeting by **The Gazette**, **CTV Montreal**, **Global Montreal**.



Annual Information session with MNAs



Our meeting with the premier came just before our annual information session with ministers and MNAs where we had our largest turnout ever. Ministers and MNAs from all corners of the province – from the Townships to Ungava and from the Outaouais to the Magdalen Islands – were on hand a little later Tuesday evening for a meet and greet with more than two dozen representatives from QCGN organizations, our board of directors and some stakeholders. I am pleased to note there was a significant increase in the number of

government representatives attending our annual MNA information event this year. They included ministers **Geoffrey Kelley** (Native Affairs), **Kathleen Weil** (Immigration), **Jean-Marc Fournier** (Intergovernmental Affairs), **Rita de Santis** (Reform of Democratic Institutions), **Martin Coiteux** (Municipal Affairs and Public Security), **Pierre Arcand** (Energy and Natural Resources), **Carlos Leitão** (Finance). Also there were Liberal caucus chair **Nicole Ménard**, Leader of the Opposition **Jean-François Lisée** as well as some senior political staff, including the premier's chief of staff. The evening provided us with an excellent opportunity to meet face to face with our political representatives and share our concerns. The President of the National Assembly, **Jacques Chagnon**, was on hand with me to welcome our members and colleagues to the Library of the National Assembly where the event took place. Chagnon noted that it was the most beautiful library in Quebec City, but some of our members begged to differ noting that the **Morrin Centre Library**, which hosted our past events, is a heritage gem that surpasses the Pamphile Le-May. I felt it wise not to pick sides in this debate.

Cross-Canada Official Languages Consultations 2016

The Department of Canadian Heritage is wrapping up public consultations toward the development of a new multi-year action plan for official languages in Canada. More than 5,000 Canadians have responded to the government's online questionnaire and more than 350 people have appeared in person during 22 roundtable discussions hosted by **Minister of Canadian Heritage Mélanie Joly** and **Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages Randy Boissonnault**. Representatives from English-speaking Quebec were present at three of these roundtables in Sherbrooke, Quebec City, and Montreal. A final national-level consultation with provincial sector organizations and the QCGN is scheduled to take place in Gatineau on **December 8**. And what is being learned? Statements made by the minister during public appearances before Parliamentary committees indicate that the new action plan could be focused on enhancing official language minority community vitality and promoting bilingualism among Canadians. Expect to see an emphasis on education (including early childhood development); immigration and integration; sustainable media; and, community infrastructures as priorities in the new plan. A new – and free – second language online learning portal is also being touted. Those who have not yet done so, are encouraged to familiarize themselves with our community's expectations from the new action plan by clicking [here](#).

Government Posts Job for Commissioner of Official Languages

The job of running the **Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada** has been posted. Unlike in past years, the next commissioner will not be named by the government but rather he or she will be selected from a list of applicants. The job offer is open to all Canadians, regardless of age, gender or place of residence. The government hopes this new approach based on merit will make the selection process more transparent. Since the Liberals came to power, there has been a strong desire to put an end to partisan appointments. A similar process was used for the recent appointments of 21 independent senators and one Supreme Court justice. The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for Canada was created in 1970 under the Official Languages Act. Its role is to ensure full recognition and widespread use of English and French within Canadian society and federal institutions and other organizations subject to the Official Languages Act. The commissioner, who reports directly to Parliament, is supported by the Office of the Commissioner of

Official Languages. The office's staff is based in the National Capital Region and in regional offices across Canada. The Commissioner of Official Languages, who is appointed for a seven-year term, is responsible for promoting the objectives of the Official Languages Act and overseeing full implementation, protecting the rights of all Canadians, and promoting the equality of status and use of English and French in Canadian society. The commissioner conducts investigations on complaints he or she receives. When necessary, the commissioner recommends corrective measures or changes. Read the full job posting [here](#).

A GIC Appointment is a Unique Opportunity to Build a Better Canada

Governor in Council appointments are made by the Governor General, on the advice of the Queen's Privy Council of Canada. The responsibilities of Governor in Council appointees cover a wide range of responsibilities such as making quasi-judicial decisions, providing advice and recommendations on socio-economic development issues, and managing Crown corporations. In the past, GIC appointments were coordinated through the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), through a process that was less than transparent. The current government is moving towards a more rigorous and open approach to the selection process. During this transition, an interim process is in place that seeks to fill appointments and re-appointments only to positions essential to government business and to those that deliver important services to Canadians. These appointments and re-appointments will be up to one year in length, subject to any legislative provisions. English-speaking Quebecers are encouraged to review and apply for **GIC appointment opportunities**. These positions range from Commissioner of Official Languages to membership on the Parole Board of Canada.

19th National Metropolis Conference in Montreal

The next **National Metropolis Conference** will be held in Montreal from March 16-18, 2017, under the theme *Looking Forward: Migration and Mobility in 2017 and Beyond*. On hand for the conference will be federal Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Minister **John McCallum**, Quebec Immigration, Diversity and Inclusiveness Minister **Kathleen Weil** and Montreal Mayor **Denis Coderre**. Mayor Coderre will receive conference delegates to a welcoming reception at city hall. Given the involvement of all three levels of government in the conference, and the initial response to the call for sessions, Metropolis Montreal 2017 is expected to be the biggest, best and most important Metropolis conference to date, attracting delegates from every part of Canada and every sector of society. It's not too late to host a session. For information as to how to submit a proposal click [here](#). Deadline is November 28.



Community Awards Celebration



This year's Community Awards celebration, which took place on Oct. 27, was particularly moving as we commemorated the passing of **Dr. Victor Goldbloom**, one half of the dynamic duo for which our distinguished community service award is named. We also paid homage to late **MP Mauril Bélanger** for his outstanding work in promoting linguistic duality. On behalf of the community, we also

took advantage of the event to thank outgoing **Commissioner of Official Languages Graham Fraser** for more than a decade of yeoman service to our community. The tributes added a sentimental tone to this annual event as we gathered to celebrate the many leaders in our community who have made a real difference in the lives of English-speaking Quebecers. Of course, the main event was the presentation of our annual *Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Award* to **Gerald Cutting, Miriam Green and Oliver Jones** as well as the second annual *Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award* to **Dafina Savic**. See our full story below. For pictures of the event and to read the souvenir booklet, please click [here](#). You can also read the

homages we prepared for **Dr. Victor Goldbloom** and **Mauril Bélanger** as well as the tribute to **Graham Fraser** by clicking on their names

COMMUNITY INNOVATION FUND ACCEPTING LETTERS OF INTENT

The Quebec Community Groups Network is inviting non-profit organizations that serve English-speaking Quebecers to announce their intention to apply for the Community Innovation Fund (CIF) which was set up to finance social initiatives to improve employability or basic socioeconomic security for vulnerable youth, seniors/caregivers, or newcomers in Quebec's English-language communities.



"The focus of this fund is on supporting organizations to find innovative and sustainable ways to serve the needs of our communities," said **QCGN board member James Hughes** who sits on the Governance Committee of the Community Innovation Fund. "CIF will empower communities to develop new financial models and to diversify partnerships while deepening existing ones."

"This is a model for the future that is people centered and holistic," added **CIF Governance Committee co-chair Ian Kott**, President of the NDG Seniors Citizens Council and President of Jormian Capital. "Not only will the Fund empower communities to address significant issues, it will also create corporate sector opportunities to realize long-term goals of social entrepreneurship."

"Through CIF, community organizations providing direct support to English-speaking Quebecers can benefit from funds to finance innovative projects that address the needs and priorities of vulnerable English-speaking youth, seniors/caregivers, and newcomers," explained **Maria Rivas-Rivero, manager of the Community Innovation Fund**.

Between April 2017 and March 2019, the fund will invest more than \$1 million in social initiatives while building partnerships to increase funds that will be injected into the community.

"The fund will bring new money into our communities by creating innovative collaborations with new partners, including the private sector, that will leverage federal funding and exponentially increase the benefits for the most vulnerable members of our communities," said **CIF co-chair John Buck**, chief executive officer of the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC).

Rivas-Rivero said organizations interested in the fund should submit preliminary proposals, noting they must send in a letter of intent and supporting documents by Dec. 9, 2016. An independent selection committee will review all letters of intent and shortlist 10 to 12 applicants who will be invited to submit a full project proposal through a supportive process. Full details on the CIF webpage: www.qcgn.ca/community-innovation-fund

The Community Innovation Fund (CIF) is a new resource for Quebec's English-speaking communities to put social innovation in action. Funded by the Government of Canada through the Social Partnership Initiative in Official Language Minority Communities, it is managed by the Quebec Community Groups Network.

The project was announced in the spring by Liberal **MP Marc Miller** on behalf of his colleague, **Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development**.

For more information on the Community Innovation Fund, please contact Maria Rivas Rivero at 514-868-9044, ext. 230 or Maria.Rivas-Rivero@qcgn.ca.

YOUNG QUEBECERS LEADING THE WAY TO THE FUTURE

Registration is now open for the third and final edition of **Young Quebecers Leading the Way**.

Under the theme of **A Plan for the Future: Quebec Youth and Canada in 2067** dozens of youth from six regions of Quebec will be invited to offer their views on the significance of youth engagement in shaping the future of their country.



coordinators for the 2017 edition.

"The training was a great demonstration of interprovincial collaboration with the attendance of coordinators from across the province," said QCGN project coordinator Lisanne Gamelin.

The QCGN is encouraging youth between the ages of 15 and 25 to register. Participation requires the attendance of three regional workshops on Jan. 25, Feb. 15, and March 22 from 6 to 9 p.m., and the Young Quebecers Leading the Way third annual provincial youth forum will be held in Gatineau from March 10 to 12, 2017, at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel.

Although attending the workshops is free, a \$25 fee for transportation and accommodation will apply this year for forum attendees from outside the Gatineau area. Participants must be Canadian citizens. Youth can register [here](#).

If you are not able to participate in the project but want to stay connected, follow the Young Quebecers Leading the Way on social media at [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

For additional information, please contact **Lisanne Gamelin** at lisanne.gamelin@qcgn.ca.

A HALF CENTURY LATER: WHAT NOW FOR FRENCH IMMERSION?



Photo of Murielle Parkes and Olga Melikoff: Katherine Gérard - Canadian Parents for French

The QCGN was on hand last week for a symposium organized by **Canadian Parents for French** and the **Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages** entitled **Perspectives d'avenir – Looking Ahead: What now for French Immersion?** at Vanier College on Friday.

To accompany our youth in this discussion the QCGN hired a contingent of youthful coordinators including **Guillaume Lévesque** from the Eastern Townships, **Anthony Beer** from Gaspésie, **Alice Lam** from the Greater Montreal area, **Citlalli Elizalde** from Outaouais, **Kelly Lacroix** from Abitibi-Témiscamingue and **Olivier Mutegetsi** from the provincial capital region.

On November 12 our project partners from the **Institut du Nouveau Monde** and the **Association for Canadian Studies** joined the QCGN office to train our regional youth

French Immersion began 50 years ago thanks to the efforts of a small group of dedicated parents on Montreal's South Shore. The Mothers of Immersion, who were featured in Monday's Gazette (Read [here](#)) started a "language bath" program to respond to context of the time.

Murielle Parkes, Olga Melikoff and Valerie Neale, who co-founded the system at Margaret Pendlebury Elementary School in 1965-66, realized that their children would have to learn the language of the majority to thrive in Quebec, and established the first French Immersion program in the country. Many similar programs were implemented over the years and French second language learning has become an increasingly valued part of instruction in our English School Boards.

Fifty years later, Friday's bilingual symposium celebrated how far we've come, but also examined the state of French Second Language programs and outcomes for English-speaking youth in Quebec, both pedagogically and socially. The day included a number of talks by researchers, a presentation about QCGN's ***Creating Spaces for Young Quebecers***, and panel discussion which proposed concrete solutions for the coming 50 years. (See conference papers at this [link](#).)

Among the researcher presenters was **Benoit Côté**, an educational psychologist from the Université de Sherbrooke. He gave a presentation on the Option-études Châteauguay program that brings together Secondary 1 and 2 students from Howard S. Billings High School and École Gabrielle-Roy in Châteauguay.

Based on interviews with students, teachers, school staff and parents at the time and five years later, he reported that students felt they had a better command of the other language; that the student's developed strong bonds that lasted post graduation; and that none of the students lost their cultural identity.

David D'Aoust, chairman of the New Frontiers School Board, said the program eased language tension between English and French-speaking students at the two local high schools and created lasting friendships among the students who participated in the exchange. He said the pilot project has become a regular program due to popular demand by students and parents.

Another study looked at the attitudes of English students towards learning French Second Language (FSL) learning. The researchers reported that a slight majority of students appreciated their French courses, however many students reported negative issues including a perceived lack of interest and skills on behalf of FSL teachers.

In the afternoon, researchers, teachers, parents, and community groups discussed how French Immersion could be improved to better meet the needs of students, and asked the questions: Are we asking too much of the schools? What role can the community play? At the end of the symposium the main questions being asked were: Why had this discussion not taken place earlier, and When is it going to take place again?

BRIDGE-BUILDERS CELEBRATED AT COMMUNITY AWARDS CEREMONY

By Irwin Block

In a spirit of recognizing accomplishments and commitment to strengthen Quebec's English-speaking community, many of its leaders, advocates, and friends gathered to celebrate on Oct. 27.

The mood was upbeat as members and stakeholders of the Quebec Community Groups Network met over dinner to honour the winners of the eighth annual *Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Award* and the *Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award*.



This year's winners are **Townshippers' Association** president **Gerald Cutting**, community volunteer **Miriam Green**, and jazz pianist **Oliver Jones**, while Roma advocate **Dafina Savic** won the Young Quebecers Leading the Way award.

Global Montreal anchor Elysia Bryan-Baynes, who emceed the evening, paid tribute to the winners for "making a real difference in the lives of English-speaking Quebecers." She described the late Victor Goldbloom as "an inspiration to our community."

Dr. Goldbloom along with his wife Sheila are the namesakes of the QCGN's distinguished community service award that honours individuals who have gone above and beyond in contributing to the vitality and reputation of Quebec's English-speaking community and who have built bridges of understanding between Quebecers of different backgrounds.

Dr. Goldbloom—the pediatrician, Liberal politician and first Jewish cabinet minister in the province, former Commissioner of Official Languages, and lifelong bridge-builder among linguistic and religious communities—died in February at 92.

In a written tribute, the QCGN praised Goldbloom for having been "a pillar of wisdom, faith, certitude, calm and, above all, enormous accomplishment."

Sheila Goldbloom, who attended with her son Jonathan, thanked the QCGN for continually playing an important role in the total community. "Its member organizations have developed more skills in talking to each other and to all of Quebec," she noted, stressing the advantages of a two-language country.

"We have to build a Canada that has two official languages and understand that we can live together in that way, and neither will be lessened by having it – you will be stronger if you take part," she said.

Graham Fraser attended the event for the last time in his role as Commissioner of Official Languages. Fraser, who has described his role as "part cheerleader, part nag," was praised for "forcefully advocating that Quebec's English-speaking community be seen as part of two official language communities in Canada, and that federal institutions recognize our national status."

QCGN's formal tribute said Fraser showed "unwavering dedication to evidence-based policy development" and "will be lionized for his role in obtaining full recognition for Quebec's English-speaking community."

"The Quebec English-speaking community has changed in 50 years – it is now more bilingual than the majority, more involved than ever in Quebec life," commented Fraser.

Listening in the audience were Quebec **Opposition Leader Jean-François Lisée**, newly elected as leader of the Parti Québécois, several members of the Quebec Liberal caucus, including **Immigration Minister Kathleen Weil** and **MNA David Birnbaum**, as well as MP **Frank Baylis** (Pierrefonds-Dollard), who brought greetings from **Canadian Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly**.

A special tribute was offered to the late federal **Liberal MP Mauril Bélanger** (Ottawa Vanier), who died after losing his battle with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) and successfully getting the House of Commons to agree to a gender-neutral version of O Canada. The QCGN said he was "a treasured friend, an ally of rare strategic acumen, a consummate patriot, and a tower of strength and understanding."

The evening's highlight was the award ceremony and its winners, described as having "steadfast commitments, which have made them more confident, more creative, and more courageous in their undertaking."

Cutting said that when the early French and English settlers developed the Eastern Townships, "we learned to live together ... to be able to create partnerships." Looking ahead, he said the English-speaking community has to work toward "becoming not just a minority, (but) a full participating partner at the decision-making table."

Green, the first woman to head a regional social service agency in Quebec, is a veteran volunteer community organizer and chairperson of the **Queen Elizabeth Health Complex**. She said a plaque

at its radiology unit thanks the Goldblooms for "help and inspiration" in transforming the former hospital.

Pianist Oliver Jones, 82, said he is looking forward to winding down his public performing career, with a handful of concerts to go, but then will focus on promoting Canadian artistic talent.

"There is an abundance of talent here. I want to continue to help our young musicians and singers, be it in classical, jazz, even hip hop," he said, laughing. After travelling the world eight times, Jones said he's certain "there is no place like right here, at home, in Montreal."

Dafina Savic, 27, who won the youth award, said she does not regard herself as a leader because "change has yet to be attained" for members of the Roma community who continue to suffer persecution in parts of Europe and discrimination, including in Canada. "Under the previous government, Roma were designated as bogus refugees – in spite of the fact they were persecuted people," she said, pledging to continue her struggle.

TOWNSHIPPERS' AWARDS \$20,000 IN MCGILL BURSARIES TO FOUR LOCAL STUDENTS

By Corrinna Pole
Townshippers' Association

Townshippers' Association, in partnership with McGill University, is pleased to announce that four Townships students, with English and French language skills, have been awarded \$20,000 in academic scholarships through the McGill Health and Social Services Community Leadership Bursary Program. In return, the students have committed to give back to their communities by working in a public health and social services institution or related organization for a minimum of one year after graduation from their programs.

"We are happy to play a part in this program which gives students the funds they need to pursue their education while also investing in the future of accessible care in the Eastern Townships," said Rachel Hunting, Townshippers' Association executive director. "Having bilingual professionals in the health and social services sector is essential in ensuring our community have access to quality healthcare in a language they can understand."

The 2016-2017 recipients are Durham-Sud resident **Jennifer Deslaurier**, who is studying radiology at Collège Laflèche in Trois-Rivières; and **Emily MacGregor**, from Sherbrooke and attending the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Fulford resident **Brittany Pegg** who is studying at Champlain College Saint-Lambert, and **Jessica Tear**, a resident of Sherbrooke and student at the Lennoxville Vocational Training Centre, who are all nursing students.

Since 2010, Townshippers' Association has had the privilege of assisting with bursary applications in the historical Eastern Townships, encompassing the whole of the Estrie and portion of the Montérégie-East regions. The scholarship program is awarded through McGill University's Training and Retention of Health Professionals Project, which aims at ensuring English-speaking Quebecers have access to the full range of health and social services in their own language.

Thanks to the generosity of the McGill Bursary Program, 21 bursaries amounting to approximately \$140,000 have been awarded to Townships students providing them with financial support to complete their educations and pursue careers in the region as nurses, technicians (radiology, inhalation therapy, etc.) social workers, psychologists, nutritionists and more.

The **McGill Health and Social Services Community Leadership Bursary Program** is open to all full-time university, Cégep/college or secondary/vocational school students from selected regions of Quebec, with English and French language skills, who are studying in health and social service programs. There are two categories of awards available; Category 1 is for students from selected Quebec regions who are studying outside their region and Category 2 is for students from select regions who are studying within their region.

The next call for proposals will be launched in the spring of 2017. For details and criteria visit Topportunity.ca/Student and follow Townshippers' Association on Facebook for the next round of

application deadlines. For further information about this project, contact Townshipers' Community Information Coordinator, Evelina Smith, at info@townshipers.org or call 819-566-2182 (toll-free 1-877-566-2182).

HOLIDAY HAPPY HOUR IN QUEBEC CITY

Voice of English-speaking Québec, in partnership with the **Literary and Historical Society of Québec**, is once again holding its annual Holiday Happy Hour at the Morrin Centre. Our two member organizations in the provincial capital are inviting colleagues, friends, and partners to support a good cause by bringing canned food items for VEQ's Christmas Hamper Campaign collection. Light refreshments and hors d'oeuvres will be served and there will be a cash bar benefiting the Christmas Hamper Campaign. There will also be some great door prizes! The 5 à 7 happy hour takes place on **Wednesday, Dec. 7** at the Morrin Centre (44 chaussée des Ecossais in Québec City). Please RSVP by Nov. 30 to info@veq.ca or call 418-683-2366, ext. 221.

SAVE THE DATE: QCGN HOLIDAY BREAKFAST TO BE HELD ON DECEMBER 12



QCGN staff has set the date for its third annual **Holiday Breakfast and Open House**, which will be held on **Monday, December 12**. Launched in 2014, this staff-led QCGN tradition is coupled with a fundraising activity to support one of our member organizations. In its inaugural year, our brunch raised money and collected warm clothing for the **Chez Doris** women's shelter and last year we raised funds for the **Fondation Notre Home Foundation**. This year, staff has chosen to raise funds for **Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre**, one of our member organizations. Since 1927, Tyndale St-Georges has provided empowering educational programming for residents of Little Burgundy from birth through adulthood. Programs range from early literacy programs for 0 to 5-year-olds to life skills training for adults. The aim of Tyndale St. Georges is to ensure that each member of their community has the opportunity and skills needed to realize their potential. We look forward to celebrating with you on December 12 and appreciate your unflagging support for our Network. Starting at 8:30 a.m. on Monday, December 12, the QCGN elves will be brewing coffee, serving homemade goodies, and flipping pancakes for our members, partners and stakeholders who are invited to share some holiday cheer and make a contribution to support the activities of the Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre. If you cannot attend but want to show your support for Tyndale St. Georges, you can donate to them [online](#).

Thank you for reading our regular newsletter. For up-to-date news about the Quebec Community Groups Network you can visit our website at www.qcgn.ca or follow us on Facebook and/or Twitter.

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1819 René-Lévesque West
Suite 400
Montreal, QC H3H 2P5
info@qcgn.ca
514 868-9044